

CHUMEKUI KENBUN

NIGHTMARE INSPECTOR



YUMEKUI KENBUN
NIGHTMARE INSPECTOR



SHADOWS

YUMEKUI KENBUN
NIGHTMARE INSPECTOR



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THE
TWENTIETH
NIGHT:
PARASITE

SEEKING
SOLACE

UNDER
COVER
OF
DARK-
NESS

THEY
COME
TO THE
SLIVER
STAR
TEA HOUSE

YES, I TOLD
HIM ABOUT
HIRUKO AND
HE SAID HE HAD
A NIGHTMARE
FOR HIM TO EAT.

SO TONIGHT'S
CUSTOMER IS
YOUR CHILDHOOD
FRIEND, HFUMI?

YEAH, THAT'S
RIGHT! HE'S
A RICH ONLY
CHILD TOO.

IS YOUR
FRIEND
(STUPID)
LIKE YOU?



HA,
YES.

YOU'RE
HERE!
COME
ON IN,
DON'T BE
SHY.



GO
GOOD
EVENING.



HIS
FATHER
DIED WHEN
HE WAS
YOUNG,
SO I'VE
BEEN LIKE
A FATHER
FIGURE TO
HIM EVER
SINCE.

THIS IS
MY FRIEND
SEIICHI
NAGUMO.



YOU MUST
HAVE BEEN
SO LONELY,
EVEN WITH
HIFUMI
AROUND.

OH...
SO IT WAS
JUST YOU
AND YOUR
MOTHER.



BESIDES,
HIFUMI
WOULD JUST
BARGE INTO
MY ROOM AND
START TALKING
TO HIMSELF...

NO, I'VE
NEVER FELT
LONELY.



OH
YES.

WELL,
SEIICHI,
TELL ME
ABOUT
YOUR NIGHTMARE.



SOB...
SOB...

!

H-
Hifumi??

OH
YES.



YOU MIGHT
THINK THIS
IS WEIRD...

BUT
IN MY DREAMS,
I'M IN LOVE
WITH A
WOMAN
NAMED
KEIKO.



FOGET

UM...
WELL...

KEIKO...

FOGET

SHE'S
A TRAM
CONDUCTOR
...



I'M
FRUSTRATED,
BUT I CAN'T
GET OFF THE
TRAM ALONE.
ALL I CAN DO
IS SIT AND
WATCH HER...

BUT
FOR SOME
REASON
SHE WON'T
BUDGE FROM
HER SPOT,
SO I CAN'T
VENTURE
OUT WITH
HER.



YOU'VE
FINALLY
BECOME
A MAN.

HLH?!

C
O
N
G
R
A
T
U
L
A
T
I
O
N
S
!



SO I
WANT
YOU TO
HELP ME
GET HER
OFF THE
TRAM...

CAN'T
GET
OFF?
HLH?



NOW YOU'VE
FALLEN IN LOVE,
EVEN IF IT IS
IN A DREAM.
I'M DELIGHTED!

YOU WERE
ALWAYS SO
SHY, HIDING
BEHIND YOUR
MOTHER.

HMM...
HE'S
PRETTY
WORKED
UP
ABOUT
THIS.

I REALLY
CARE FOR
HER!

DON'T MAKE
FUN OF ME!
I'M SERIOUS!



HOW CAN
YOU BE SO
COLD?

WHAT?

WHA—?

BUT HONESTLY...
YOUR LOVE LIFE
DOESN'T INTEREST
ME AND YOUR
NIGHTMARE
DOESN'T SOUND
ALL THAT BAD.

CLATTER



COME
HERE,
HIRUKO!

YANK



IT'S A GREAT
OPPORTUNITY
FOR HIM.

THIS IS
PROBABLY
HIS FIRST
LOVE.



LIKE I JUST SAID...
SEIICHI IS SHY AND
DOESN'T GET OUT
MUCH, SO HE
DOESN'T HAVE
MUCH EXPERIENCE
IN RELATIONSHIPS.



TRYING
TO BE HIS
FATHER, SH?

A GOOD
OPPORTUNITY?



EVEN
IF IT IS
JUST A
DREAM,
PLEASE
DO
SOME-
THING
...



FINE. I
GUESS I'LL
HELP YOU
SAVE FACE
TONIGHT.

SLEEP
NOW...
LEAVE
THIS
WORLD
BEHIND.







STRANGE
SCENERY...



AND THE
AIR IS
MUGGY.



COZY, ISN'T IT?
THIS ROOMING
IS SOOTHING
TOO.

R-
REALLY?



THAT'S WHEN
I STARTED
HAVING THIS
DREAM...



ANY-
WAY
...



LATELY,
THERE'S
BEEN A
MAN COMING
AROUND
TO VISIT
MY MOTHER.
IT'S GOTTEN
SO BAD THAT
I'VE BEEN
SHUTTING
MYSELF IN
MY ROOM.

TO BE
HONEST,
THERE
ARE TIMES
WHEN
I DON'T
EVEN LIKE
HAVING
HIM
AROUND.



I
HEARD
YOU
DON'T
LIKE
GOING
OUTSIDE
MUCH...

UWA...
WELL...



I'M
UNCOMFORTABLE
AROUND
STRANGERS...



I REALLY
WISH TO
MARRY HER.

SHE'S SO
PURE AND
GENTLE.



THAT'S
KEIKO
OVER
THERE.



IT'S NOT
JUST A
CRUSH.
I FEEL
LIKE I'VE
KNOWN
HER
FOREVER.

SMILE



NO. I REALLY
WANT US TO
GO OUT INTO
THE WORLD
TOGETHER...
BUT...



SHE'S
NEVER
TRIED TO
APPROACH
YOU, HAS
SHE?



OUR
HEARTS
ARE
STRONGLY
INTER-
TWINED.

I SEE.



BUT
...



THIS TRAM
IS JUST
GOING IN
CIRCLE'S...



OH! THEN,
HIRUKO...

I NEVER
NOTICED.

IT'S
THE SAME
SCENERY
OVER AND
OVER...

?!

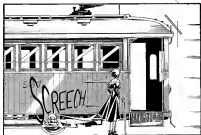

I
SUPPOSE


THEN
THE
TRAM
WILL
HAVE
TO
STOP!

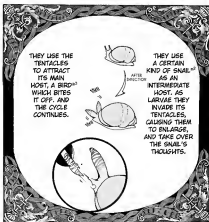
CAN YOU
JUMP
OUT THE
WINDOW
AND
CREATE A
TRAM
STOP?







THE LARVAE OF CIRCULATING SPERM WERE DISCOVERED IN 1981.
AS A RESULT, SNAIL'S CIRCULATION
OF CIRCULATING SPERM IN 1981.



THEY USE THE
TENTACLES
TO ATTRACT
ITS MAIN
HOST, A BIRD¹⁰
WHICH BITES
IT OFF, AND
THE CYCLE
CONTINUES.

THEY USE
A CERTAIN
KIND OF SNAIL¹¹
AS AN
INTERMEDIATE
HOST. AS
LARVAE THEY
INVADE ITS
TENTACLES,
CAUSING THEM
TO ENLARGE,
AND TAKE OVER
THE SNAIL'S
THOUGHTS.

THERE
ARE THESE
PARASITES
THAT HAVE
YET TO BE
DISCOVERED
IN THIS
COUNTRY.



LOOK.

WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN?



HER FEET
ARE STUCK
TO THE
FLOOR?!



NO...
THEY'RE
GROWING
OUT OF THE
FLOOR.





AND THE
PREY IT
ATTRACTED...

...IS YOU,
SEIICHI.



AND KEIKO IS
THE TENTACLE
IT USED TO
LURE ITS PREY.



THE
TRAM
IS THE
SNAIL...



IF
WE
APPLY
WHAT
I
WAS
JUST
SAIDING
...



YES,
AND THE
PARASITE
BEHIND
IT ALL...



KEIKO IS
JUST BAIT
TO LURE
ME IN?!



...IS THE
DRIVER!



ME...?



THAT'S THE
SPACE INSIDE
THIS TRAM.

YOU SAID YOU'D
BEEN SHUT UP
IN YOUR ROOM.
WITH ALL THAT
FREE TIME YOU'VE
CREATED THIS
DREAM WORLD.



AND
A NEW MASTER
TOOK
OVER.

EVENTUALLY
THE WORLD
TOOK ON A
LIFE OF ITS
OWN.



YOUR FEELINGS
THAT THE WOMAN
WAS FAMILIAR
AND THE COZINESS
OF THE TRAIN...
IT WAS ALL
BECAUSE YOU
CREATED IT...

AND
TO TAKE
CONTROL
OF YOUR
THOUGHTS.

THE DRIVER
CREATED
A WOMAN
YOU WOULD
LIKE TO
MAKE YOU
DEPENDENT
ON THIS
WORLD.



THAT'S
WHAT
BEING
WITH
KEIKO
TRULY
MEANT.

I ALMOST
GOT
CAUGHT
UP IN
SOMETHING
I CREATED
MYSELF...



I'LL HAVE TO
START DEALING
WITH PEOPLE
FROM THE REAL
WORLD.

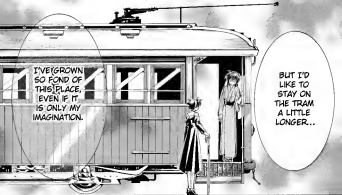


CAN
YOU DO
IT?

YES. AND
GETTING
OFF THE
TRAM
MEANS
YOU'LL BE
LEAVING
THAT
WORLD
BEHIND.



YES...
I HAVE NO
CHOICE.







HIS MOTHER'S
LONELINESS
FROM LOSING
HER SPOUSE
MADE HER
FOCUS ON
HIM TOO...



HE
NEVER
LEFT
HER
SIDE.

HE'S
CLUNG
TO HIS
MOTHER
EVER
SINCE
HIS
FATHER
DIED.



BUT RECENTLY
A MAN HAS
BEEN COMING
TO COURT HIS
MOTHER.

THAT'S WHY
HE WASN'T
LONELY WITH
JUST A SINGLE
PARENT...

THEY
MUST
HAVE
BECOME
DEPENDENT
ON EACH OTHER.



THEY'VE
BOTH
BEEN
STRUG-
GLING...

HIS
MOTHER
IS HAVING
A HARD
TIME
CHOOSING
BETWEEN
HER
BELOVED
SON AND
HER NEW
COMPANION.



...HE ALSO
COULDN'T
ACCEPT
ANOTHER
PERSON
INTRUDING
ON THEIR
RELATION-
SHIP

WHILE
SEICHI
WANTS HIS
MOTHER
TO BE
HAPPY...



SO HE
SHUT
HIMSELF
IN HIS
ROOM.





THE FAMILIARITY
OF THE GIRL...
THE COZINESS
OF THE WORLD...
IT ALL MAKES
SENSE!

THAT WORLD
WAS A SYMBOL
OF HER LOVE.
THE TRACKS THAT
SHE LAID FOR
HIM TO FOLLOW
AND PLACING
THE GIRL WHO
RESEMBLED
HER WHEN SHE
WAS YOUNGER.



UNBE-
KNOWNST
TO HIM,
SEICHI'S
MOTHER HAD
BECOME A
PARASITE
DEEP IN HIS
PSYCHE.



HE NEVER
GOT OFF
THE TRAM
IN THE END.



BUT
...



ONLY
SEICHI
KNOWS
THAT.

DO YOU
THINK HE
CAN PRY
HIMSELF
AWAY FROM
HER?

HE'S
STILL
ON THE
TRAM
THAT'S
GOING
AROUND
AND
AROUND

...

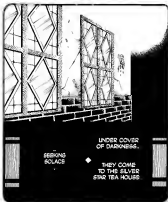
TKNK

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**THE
TWENTY-
FIRST
NIGHT:
THE KEY
(PART ONE)**







...KAGARI
AGARI



I
REMEMBER
YOU...



HIRUKO,
THE
BAKU
THAT
YOU
MET IS
NOW
ME.



BUT...



TH-
THAT'S
RIGHT.



YOUR NAME
IS EASY TO
REMEMBER...
BUT WASN'T
THAT THE
NAME OF THE
PERSON YOU
LOVED?



DOES THAT
MEAN THAT
THIS MIDGET
WASN'T THE
BAKU THEN?!

MIZUKI, WHAT
DOES THIS MEAN?
I THOUGHT YOU
SAID THE SILVER
STAR TEA HOUSE
BECAME A COUNSELING
PLACE FOR NIGHTMARES
FIVE YEARS AGO.



THIS
HIRUKO
CAME
TWO
YEARS
AGO.



THAT'S
RIGHT
...

HE INHERITED
THE SAME
THOUGHTS
AND ABILITIES,
PLUS SOME
OF THE
MEMORIES.

EVEN THOUGH
THE PREVIOUS
BAKU LOOKED
AND ACTED
DIFFERENT,
THEY ARE
STILL THE
SAME BAKU
CALLED
"HIRUKO."



SO WHAT
KIND OF
PERSON
WAS THE
LAST BAKU?

THE BAKU
CHANGES...



THAT'S
WHY HE
KNOWS
ME...

AZUSA... HE WAS MY BROTHER.





THAT'S
ALL I
KNOW.

MY NAME
IS KAGARI
AGARI.



I HAVE
NO ME-
MORIES
OF MY
PAST.



I DON'T
KNOW IF
THIS MEANS
ANYTHING,
BUT I'VE
BEEN
HAVING
THIS
NIGHTMARE.



SO I
NEED
HIRUKO
TO
UNLOCK
THE
DOORS!

I'M A
KEY.

IN IT, I'M
SURROUNDED
BY MANY DOORS.
I'M CURIOUS
TO OPEN THEM
AND SEE WHAT'S
BEHIND THEM
BUT I CAN'T.
BECAUSE IN
THE DREAM...



INSTEAD OF
WONDERING
WHAT'S BEHIND
THE DOORS,
YOU SHOULD
BE WONDERING
ABOUT WHY
YOU'RE A KEY...

WHAT A
DREAMING
DREAM
...



I'LL DO
WHAT YOU
ASK...

WELL
...



WHY
I'M A
KEY...?



FOOSH

I'VE JUST
THOUGHT OF AN
INTERESTING
WAY TO DO IT.

SLEEP
NOW...
LEAVE
THIS
WORLD
BEHIND.





What are we
going to do?
We have no
means of
paying...



We may
be poor,
but we
have you.
You're our
treasure.



If you have
no money,
I'll take your
daughter
instead.



CLICK

But you
said I
was your
treasure!



I'm sorry.
We have no
choice...



You're
sending
me away
to the
landlord's
son?!
Me?!
No! He's
a vile
man!

FATHER... MOTHER... YOU WERE MY TREASURE...

HOW... HOW COULD YOU...?

I just
want
to die.



I don't
want to
think
anymore.

MY THOUGHTS ARE DROWNING...

DO
KNOW
WHAT
HAPPENED
AFTER
THAT.

SEEMS
LIKE IT.

DID...
DID I
COMMIT
SUICIDE...?
IS THAT
WHY I
LOST MY
MEMORIES?

HE GAVE
ME A NAME
AND EVEN
NOW LOOKS
AFTER ME.

A MAN
CALLED
KUSUKI
AGARI
SAVED
ME.

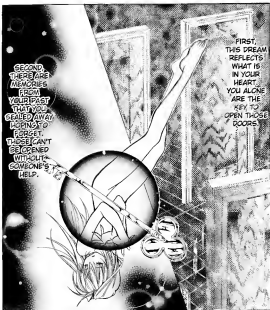
IF YOU
STILL
DON'T
UNDER-
STAND,
I GIVE
UP.

HUM?

MORON.

HE WAS
SO KIND,
AND WE
WERE SO
HAPPY. SO
WHY DID
I START
HAVING THIS
NIGHTMARE?

MEMORIES



SECOND,
THERE ARE
MEMORIES
FROM
YOUR PAST
THAT YOU
SEAL AWAY
HOPEING TO
FORGET.
THESE CAN'T
BE OPENED
WITHOUT
SOMEONE'S
HELP.

FIRST,
THIS DREAM
REFLECTS
WHAT IS
IN YOUR
HEART.
YOU ALONE
ARE THE
KEY TO
OPEN THOSE
DOORS.

LOOK.
THERE
ARE
TWO
REAS-
ONS
WHY
YOU'RE
A KEY.



SO,
WHAT
DO YOU
WANT
TO DO?

BUT IF I
TURN THE
KEY AND
OPEN THE
DOOR, THE
SEAL WILL
BE BROKEN
AND ALL
YOUR
MEMORIES
WILL COME
BACK.



SO
WHEN
YOU
OPEN
YOUR
EYES,
IT WILL
ONLY
HAVE
SEEMED
LIKE A
DREAM
TO YOU.

AND
NOW,
YOU'RE
JUST
VIEWING
YOUR
PAST.



"I'M SORRY... WE HAVE NO CHOICE."



IF WE
BRING
BACK THE
TORMENTED
MEMORIES,
IT'LL MAKE
YOUR
NIGHTMARE
ALL THE
MORE
DELICIOUS.



BUT THAT'S THE BORING CHOICE.

?!



RIGHT?



STOP!

NOOOOO!!



CLICK

BUT IF I DON'T
REMEMBER
THEN I'LL
KEEP HAVING
THE NIGHTMARE,
WON'T IT?



WHAT
IS IT
WITH
THIS
MAN...

I'M
TEASING.
THE
DOOR
WON'T
OPEN
IF YOU
DON'T
WANT
IT TO.



WAIT!
WHERE
ARE YOU
GOING?!



WHAT
SHOULD
I DO?
IF I DON'T
OPEN ANY
DOOR...

?

I THINK WE
SHOULD TRY
THIS DOOR.

!

B-BUT
I BET THIS
MEMORY WILL
BE FAR MORE
PAINFUL THAN
THE OTHERS!

IT'S THE
ONLY DOOR
LEFT.

NO! THIS
DOOR IS
DIFFERENT
FROM THE
OTHERS!

JUST TAKE
A LOOK. IF
YOU DON'T
LIKE IT, I'LL
TAKE YOU
OUT...
BUT THAT
WON'T
SOLVE YOUR
PROBLEM.

?!


DO YOU
ONLY HAVE
MEMORIES
OF THE
PAST?

IT COULD
BE THE
OPPOSITE.



CLICK

THIS
...



HELPING
PLEASE
...

ALL
RIGHT
...

I HAVE
NO
OTHER
CHOICE.

YOU'LL
JUST STAY
STUCK IN YOUR
NIGHTMARE.





COULD
THIS
BE MY
FUTURITY



OH,
KUSUKI
...



MY
DREAM
OF LIFE
WITH
KUSUKI

THIS
IS...



I
SEE



I'M SO
HAPPY
...





**THE
TWENTY-
SECOND
NIGHT:
THE KEY
(PART TWO)**



SINCE THEN,
I'VE BEEN
DREAMING
ABOUT MY
FUTURE WITH
KUSUKI.

YES,
TWO
YEARS
AGO.



SO,
AZUSA
LEFT
YOU
IN THE
DOOR
THAT
HELD
YOUR
IDEAL
FUTURE.

BUT
...





AS HIS
SUCCESSOR,
YOU'D
BETTER TAKE
RESPON-
SIBILITY
FOR THIS!



I NEED
YOU TO
ENTER MY
DREAM AND
TAKE ME
OUT OF THAT
DOOR!



WHAT MADE
YOU THINK HE
ACTUALLY
RETURNED
YOUR LOVE?

YOU SAID
THAT YOU
WERE
MARRIED
IN THE
DREAM...



LOOK AT HOW
WRETCHED AND
MISERABLE I AM!

IT'S
ALL YOUR
BROTHER'S
FAULT!
HE LED ME
TO THAT
DOOR!



I'M
GETTING
TIRED OF
YOU.

TSK TSK.
YOU'RE AS
SELFISH AS
EVER.



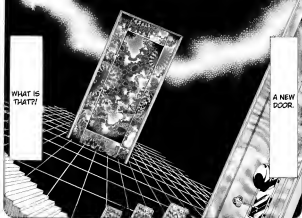
YOU'RE
JUST AS
COLD
AS THE
LAST
BAKU!

AND
YOU!



SOMETHING
NEW?

OH, AND AFTER
HE ENTERED MY
DREAM, SOMETHING
NEW APPEARED.



WHAT IS THAT?!

A NEW DOOR.



PRE-
DICTING
...?

YES.

HE WAS
PROBABLY
PREDICTING
...



YES...

HIRUKO,
COULD
IT BE...?



*Not
something
I would do.*

AZUSA
MADE
THAT
DOOR...
BUT I
DON'T
REMEM-
BER
WHY.

THAT YOU
WOULD
COME BACK
HERE.

EITHER WAY YOUR NIGHT-MARES WOULD BRING YOU BACK TO THE SILVER STAR TEA HOUSE. THAT IS WHY AZUSA CREATED A NEW DOOR.

AND IF YOU WEREN'T IN ANY DOOR, YOU WOULD KEEP HAVING THE PREVIOUS NIGHT-MARE...

FANTASIES RARELY OCCUR IN REALITY, SO YOU WOULD BE VIEWING YOUR IDEAL LIFE BEHIND THAT DOOR UNTIL YOU GREW TIRED OF IT.



I SUPPOSE.



THAT'S SO MEAN! TO TOY WITH PEOPLE'S DREAMS! YOU HAVE TO DO SOMETHING!

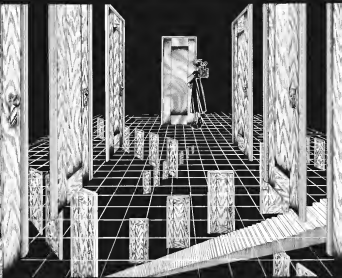


FOOSH

LET'S START
BY TAKING
YOU OUT OF
YOUR IDEAL
DOOR.

SLEEP
NOW...
LEAVE
THIS
WORLD
BEHIND.





THERE'S
NOWHERE
FOR ME
TO GO...

MY
MEMORIES
OF THE
PAST...
NOR MY
HOPES
FOR THE
FUTURE...

NOW I
HAVE
NOTHING
LEFT...

ARE
YOU
HAPPY
NOW?

WHAT?

YOU SPEAK
AS IF YOUR
LIFE IS OVER.

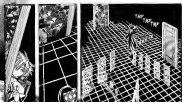
A NEW
IDEAL...

NEW HOPES
AND NEW
ENCOUNTERS
WILL CREATE
A DOOR WITH
A NEW IDEAL
FOR YOU.

KAGARI,
YOUR
FUTURE
STARTS
FROM
HERE AND
GOES ON.



YOUR
CANDOR
IS WHAT
MAKES YOU
ATTRACTIVE.



YES...
IF I BELIEVE
THAT, I CAN
GO ON.
BESIDES...



I'VE BEEN
A FOOL FOR
BELIEVING SO
LONG IN AN
UNOBTAINABLE
DREAM.



IT'S
REACTING
TO ITS
CREATOR



TH-THAT
CASE
GIVES
ME THE
CREEPS!



HIRUKO?



CLICK



THE
CREATOR
IS STILL IN
CONTROL
HERE...



THE KEY
TO THE
CASE...

MY
HAND
...

WHEN
DID
I-?

WHAT'S
THE
MATTER?



FOOSH



HUH
...?
WHAT?

?

HE WAS
THE ONE
WHO WENT
MISSING...!



THE AIR IS DARK.

I CAN'T
STAND
BEING NEXT
TO THIS!
I'M LOSING
MY MIND!
I DON'T
WANT TO
BE HERE
ANYMORE!

I'VE HAD
ENOUGH!
TAKE ME
BACK TO
REALITY!

IT FEELS LIKE TO TWIST UP
MY HEART APART.

WHY?

AN
ILLU-
SION?
!!

YES...
BUT
IT'S AN
ILLUSION.



THIS SPACE
IS COMPLETELY
UNRELATED TO
YOUR NIGHTMARE.

YES, THIS NO
LONGER HAS
ANYTHING TO
DO WITH YOU.



IT DOESN'T
EXIST
ANYWHERE
...

TIME TO
WAKE UP
NOW.

FOOSH





MIZUKI...

HIFUMI,
DID YOU
HEAR
THAT?

GOODBYE...

銀
星
館



I HAVE
TO KEEP
BELIEVING
IN MY
FUTURE...



SHE
SAID
AZUSA
WAS
THERE
...

IT'S
AZUSA
...



YOUR
BROTHER
IS STILL...

MIZUKI
...

...

HE USED TO
BE A NORMAL
PERSON, RIGHT?



WHY DID
AZUSA
BECOME A
BAKU?

FIVE
YEARS
AGO A
MONSTER
CAME TO
AZUSA.

A
MONSTER?

OR
BOUND
TO THE
BLOOD-
LINES
THAT
RAN IN
HIM...



YES...
HE WAS.
BUT HE DIDN'T
WANT TO BE
A PERSON
ANYMORE...

THE VERY FIRST BAKU, HIRUKO.

BUT HE COULD
NEITHER BE BORN
NOR DIE SO HE
PASSED ON HIS
ABILITIES AND
MEMORIES TO AZUSA,
AND ERASED HIS OWN
CONSCIOUSNESS.



HE LONGED
FOR HIS OWN
DESTRUCTION.

HIS HANDS
WERE COLDER
THAN BEFORE.
BUT HE
ALWAYS
MANAGED
TO WARM
MY HEART.

HE WAS
SO KIND
TO ME.



BUT
EVEN
SO,
AZUSA
ALWAYS
COM-
FORTED
ME.

THAT WAS
ALL THAT
MATTERED...

BUT...

HIS
APPEARANCE
DIDN'T
CHANGE,
BUT HE
COULDN'T
EAT
ANYTHING
BUT
NIGHT-
MARES.

HE WASN'T
MY BROTHER
OR EVEN A
PERSON
ANYMORE.

AZUSA
THEN
BECAME
A BARD!



EVENTUALLY THE THOUGHTS THAT CAME WITH BEING A BAKU TOOK THEIR TOLL AND HE STARTED TO GO CRAZY.

EVEN THOUGH HE COULD NEVER BE BORN NOR DIE, HIS APPETITE FOR NIGHTMARES ONLY INCREASED...



BUT THIS CREATED AN UNFATHOMABLE FEELING OF EMPTINESS, AND HE LONGED FOR DEATH LIKE THE FIRST BAKU HAD.





ALWAYS
SUCH
POOR
TASTE,
AZUSA.

I UNDER-
STAND
WHY THE
DOOR IS
THERE.



AM I
WRONG?



OR...WAS
CORRECT.

THAT'S
CORRECT.

BUT IT'S
DIFFERENT
NOW...
I WANTED
TO THANK
YOU.

SO YOU
CREATED
THIS DOOR
TO MEET
WITH ME,
YOUR STILL
UNKNOWN
SUCCESSOR.

YOU
ALREADY
DESIRED
DESTRUC-
TION WHEN
YOU MET
KAGARI
TWO YEARS
AGO.

IT WAS
AFTER THE
EARTHQUAKE
OUR MEETING
WAS DESTINED.



DO YOU
REMEMBER
THE DAY WE
FIRST MET?
...IT'S BEEN
TWO YEARS
NOW.



YES...
YOUR
NIGHT-
MARE.



BECAUSE
YOU CARRIED
MY MEANS OF
DESTRUCTION.

YOU WERE HAVING THE MOST TERRIBLE DREAM IN THE WORLD.



MY EYES
...
I'M
LOSING
CONSCI...

LIKE
THIS...





?!



LOOK, IT'S
GOING TO
JUMP OUT OF
THE SCREEN AT
ANY MOMENT.



YOU KNOW
HOW THE
SEA IS SO
BIG THAT IT
SWALLOWS
EVERYTHING?

YOUR
DREAM
IS LIKE
THAT.

VIOLENCE,
DECEPTION,
DEBAUCHERY,
POVERTY...
THEY'RE ALL
SMALL WAVES
IN THE VAST
SEA OF
DARKNESS.

IT EVEN
SANK MY
ROTTING MIND
DEEPER INTO
MADNESS.

IT'S SUCH
A GOOD
PLACE...
FOR ME.

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY MY
PREDECESSOR HELD BACK...

CHITOSE
KUROSU

ARE YOU
AFRAID
OF THIS
DREAM?

DO YOU
REMEMBER
NOW?

PLEASE...

STOP...

...OR IS
IT BECAUSE
IT REMINDS
YOU OF YOUR
PAINFUL
PAST?

WHY...?

STOP!

HEH
HEH...
YOU'VE
TRIED TO
AVOID IT
EVER
SINCE.
HAVEN'T
YOU?

POOR CHITOSE...

LONG, BLESSED LIFE. YOUR NAME REALLY DOESN'T SUIT YOU.

WHY DON'T
WE GO NOW?
AS YOU SAID,
THIS PLACE IS
USELESS.

HEH HEH...
SORRY.
I MADE YOU
REMEMBER
TOO MUCH.
I ONLY
WANTED
TO THANK
YOU.

YOU HAVE
SOMEWHERE
TO RETURN TO,
AS DO I...



THE TWENTY- THIRD NIGHT: REASONS



WHAT
HAPPENED
WITH YOU
AND AZUSA?

I'VE NEVER
SEEN YOU
LIKE THIS...



EAT
THIS.
YOU'LL
FEEL
BETTER.
IDIOT.

SHEESH...
STOP
MAKING
MIZUKI
WORRY.



HIRUKO,
TELL ME...









YES, FOR
THE SAKE OF
BUSINESS HE
CAN'T STAY
LIKE THIS.



**BUT
WHOSE
NIGHT-
MARE**

A BAKU EATS
NIGHTMARES,
SO MAYBE IF
WE MAKE HIM
EAT ONE HE'LL
START TO
REMEMBER...



I'VE BEEN
HAVING IT
FOR A WHILE.



I'LL
GIVE
YOU MY
NIGHT-
MARE
...



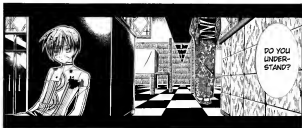
YOU'LL
UNDER-
STAND
WHY I
NEVER
TOLD YOU
ABOUT
IT...



...

COME INTO MY
NIGHTMARE.







WELCOME HOME...

HIRUKO.



ARE YOU

...

...
MIZUKI?





YOU'RE HERE
TO REPLACE
AZUSA, RIGHT?

I UNDER-
STAND...



WHAT'S
THAT...?

A
CASE?



THE
CASE,
THE
CLOTHES...



YOU'RE
THE
SAME.

YOUR
EYES,
YOUR
HAIR
COLOR...



IT
GAVE
ME THE
CHILLS...

THAT
CASE...



SH-
ER



THAT'S
NOT RIGHT!
I'LL THROW
IT AWAY,
OKAY?!



HUH?



AZUSA
NEVER
CARRIED
A CASE!





IT'S ALL
RIGHT.
YOU'RE
WELCOME
HERE.



WHY
DID YOU
COME
HERE...?



WHY DON'T
YOU HAVE
A SEAT?

OH!



OF
COURSE
YOU'D
CHOOSE
THAT
ONE.

YOU
HAVE HIS
MEMORIES...



THE
SEAT
AZUSA
ALWAYS
SAT IN!



?



AH.

YOUR
MEMORIES
OF HIM
WEREN'T
GOOD
ONES.

STILL,
YOU WANT
TO HOLD...

YOU'RE
LOOKING
FOR
SIMILAR-
ITIES
BETWEEN
AZUSA
WHEN HE
WAS THE
BAKU AND
ME, THE
NEW
BAKU...

AND ARE
TRYING TO
FILL THE
EMPTYNESS
INSIDE BY
RECALLING
ALL THE
DETAILS.

...



HERE
YOU
ARE.



WHY
DID YOU
GIVE
THAT
TO ME
KNOWING
IT'LL
COUGH
UP
BLOOD?

I
CAN'T
DRINK
COFFEE



I SEE...



WHERE

...

IF ONLY
YOU DIDN'T
EXIST!

THEN,
WHO ARE
YOU?!

WHY
DID YOU
TAKE
AZUSA
FROM
ME?!

WHY DID
YOU BECOME
THE BAKU?!
HOW DID
YOU BECOME
THE NEW
BAKU?!

WHERE IS
AZUSA?!

...

YOU CAN
NEVER
SEE HIM
AGAIN...





BUT I
THOUGHT
AS LONG
AS YOU
WERE HERE,
I'D EVEN-
TUALLY
FIND OUT
WHERE
AZUSA
WAS...

THE
SADNESS
AND ANGER
ARE STILL
DEEP INSIDE
ME...
I KEEP
SEEING HOW
RIDICULOUS
I WAS
THEN...

AT THE
TIME, I
BLAMED
YOU FOR
AZUSA
LEAVING.

THIS
IS MY
NIGHT-
MARE
...



WH-WHAT
ARE YOU
SAYING?!

?!

IF YOU
DON'T
NEED ME,
THEN KILL
ME.

I'M NOT
HIRUKO,
NOR AM I
AZUSA...
I'M OF NO
USE TO YOU.



A
STABLE
ENVIRON-
MENT
THAT I
NEVER
KNEW...

PARENTS
REJOICING
IN A
CHILD'S
GROWTH.



THE PEOPLE
AROUND
ME LOOKED
AFTER ME
SO WELL.

I WAS
THEIR JOY,
THEY SAID.



IF I TELL
YOU THE
REASON,
WILL YOU
KILL ME?



SO I
WOULDN'T
BE ABLE
TO COMMIT
SUICIDE...

A BOARD
WAS STUCK
IN MY MOUTH
TO PREVENT ME
FROM BITING
MYSELF AND MY
LIMBS WERE
BROKEN.



CAN
YOU
DO IT?

I CAN'T
SEE ANY
POINT IN
LIVING...
OH, BUT
MY HANDS
ARE NOW...



YOU'RE NOT
CHITOSE
ANYMORE!

SHUT UP!
WHAT ARE
YOU TALKING
ABOUT?!



YOU'RE
THE BAKU
HIRUKO
NOW!

YOU MAY
HAVE A
PAST MORE
TRAGIC THAN
MY OWN,
BUT...

IF YOU'RE
SUFFERING THAT MUCH...

BUT IF YOU
DON'T GET THAT...



THIS
MADE
EVERY-
ONE
HAPPY.





THEN
I'LL DO
WHAT YOU
WANT.

I'LL KILL
YOU WITH
MY OWN
HANDS,
CHITOSE...



...NGH...

AH...





PLEASE

...
DON'T
CLING
TO THE
PAST
ANY-
MORE

...

PART OF ME
BLAMED YOU,
BUT YOU'RE STILL
IMPORTANT TO ME.
I NEED YOU.

AZUSA'S
MEMORIES
LIVE INSIDE
THE BAKU SO
IT'S LIKE A
PART OF
HIM IS STILL
HERE.



AZUSA'S
CONSCIOUSNESS
SHOULDN'T HAVE
PASSED ON,
BUT YOU CAME
TO THE SILVER
STAR TEA HOUSE
ANYWAY...



I REALLY
DIDN'T CARE
ANYMORE.

I'M
NOT
AZUSA.

THAT TIME
I REJECTED
YOUR
FEELINGS...

A BAKU...
OR AZUSA...

EVEN IF
IT MEANT
BEING
SOMEONE
ELSE.

ANYONE BUT
CHITOSE...

THAT WAY
THERE'S NO
NEED TO
REMEMBER
ANYMORE...

THE REASON
I BECAME A
BAKU WAS
BECAUSE—LIKE
AZUSA—I
WANTED TO
LEAVE THE
PAST BEHIND.

I WANTED
TO THROW
THAT LIFE
AWAY...



THANK
YOU FOR
EVERYTHING,
MIZUKI...



*YOU'RE
JUST LIKE
THE OLD
BAKU!*

NO...

IS THIS
FROM
AZUSA'S
MEMORIES?

I DON'T
UNDERSTAND
WHO HIRIKO
IS ANYMORE.

I...

I DON'T
KNOW...

I NEVER
REALIZED THAT
YOU HAD A
TRAGIC PAST...
YOU NEVER
LET ON...
INSTEAD...

BUT FOR SOME REASON MY HEART FEELS WHOLE.

LIKE BEFORE...



HIRUKO,
YOU NEED
TO SEE
YOURSELF
AS YOU ARE
NOW...

KNOWING
THAT
MIGHT
HELP ME
FIND OUT
WHERE
HE IS
NOW...

...AND THE
WAY TO
BRING HIM
BACK.



...UNTIL
YOU'RE
READY
TO TELL
ME HOW
YOU
TOOK
OVER
BEING
THE BAKU
FROM
AZUSA.

I'LL
LET GO
OF THE
ANGER...
AND I'LL
WAIT...



EAT
THIS.

IT'S
SOMETHING
ONLY A
BAKU
CAN DO.



うん

THAT'S RIGHT...

I'M NO LONGER CHITOSE.

I'M NOT CHITOSE...

THE TWENTY- FOURTH NIGHT: LETTERS

SEEKING
SOLACE

UNDER
COVER
OF
DARK-
NESS

THEY
COME
TO THE
SILVER
STAR
TEA
HOUSE



I SORTA
GET IT,
AND I
SORTA
DON'T...

ONE THAT
HAS THE
DEEP,
STRONG,
CRIMSON
FLAVOR OF
BLOOD.



HEY, HIRUKO.
I'VE ALWAYS
WONDERED
WHAT EXACTLY
DOES A
NIGHTMARE
TASTE LIKE?
WHAT KIND
TASTES GOOD?



OH,
IT'S
TIME.

HLUH?



WELL, I
GUESS THE
INSULTS MEAN
HE'S BACK
TO NORMAL.



HEY!
I GOT
THAT!
JERK.

YOUR
NIGHTMARE
WOULD
PROBABLY
BE WEAK
AND
YELLOW.





MOST
PEOPLE
DON'T WRITE
LETTERS
BEFORE
THEY COME
HERE.

I'VE BEEN
WAITING FOR
YOU, SAI
IRIMAJIRI.

EXCUSE
ME.



OH...
WRITING
LETTERS
IS JUST
WHAT I DO.



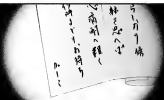
IN
WHAT
WAY?

MY
NIGHTMARE
IS ALSO
ABOUT
LETTERS.



I SENT
A LETTER
A FEW DAYS
AGO...

SENDING THEM
TO MY LOVER,
WHO WAS SENT
OFF TO SIBERIA
FOUR YEARS AGO
AND STILL HASN'T
RETURNED.



EVEN IN
MY DREAMS
I AM WRITING
LETTERS...

IS HE
WELL?
IS HE
INJURED? I KEEP
WRITING TO
SOOTHE MY
ANXIETIES.



I WRITE
MY LETTERS
UNDER THE
MOONLIGHT
ON THE
SEASHORE.
THEN I PUT
THEM IN A
BOTTLE AND
TOSS THEM
OUT TO SEA
HOPING THEY
WILL REACH
HIM...

YES,
YOU'RE
PROBABLY
RIGHT...



YOU CAN'T
REALLY EXPECT
A REPLY FROM
A MESSAGE IN
A BOTTLE...



I'VE NEVER
RECEIVED A
REPLY, YET I
KEEP WRITING.



THAT IS
ENOUGH
FOR ME.

I CAN
WRITE
ALL MY
THOUGHTS
OUT.

...BUT EVEN
IF HE NEVER
GETS THEM,
I CAN TALK
TO HIM
THROUGH
LETTERS.



NOT
SINCE
THOSE
THINGS
STARTED
COMING
INSTEAD
OF A
REPLY...

I CAN'T
WRITE
ANYMORE.



WELL,
NOW...

BUT
SURELY
YOU KEPT
WRITING
BECAUSE
YOU HOPED
FOR A
REPLY...



...SO I
CAN GO
BACK TO
WRITING THE
LETTERS
IN MY
DREAMS
AGAIN.

THAT'S
WHY I
WANT
YOU TO
LOOK,
HIRUKO...



I-I DON'T
KNOW WHAT
THEY ARE.
I'M TOO
SCARED TO
LOOK AT
THEM.

THOSE
THINGS?

SLEEP
NOW...
LEAVE
THIS
WORLD
BEHIND.

WELL...
I'LL TAKE
A LOOK.

IT'S ALL
ABOUT THE
LETTERS

CLAX





THEY KEPT
WASHING ASHORE
ONE BY ONE,
BUT NOW IT'S
STOPPED.

Ooo

Pdp

SEE...
WHAT ON
EARTH IS
INSIDE?

IF THESE
BOTTLES
ARE THE SAME
AS THE ONES
YOU SENT, WE
CAN ASSUME
THAT THE SAME
NUMBER OF
THEM HAVE NOW
RETURNED.

...

POOP
POOP



THEY'RE
NATSUO'S
EYES!

DEEP
SHINY
BLACK—
LIKE
ORBSHINS,
THE GLASS
FORMED
BY LAVA.



THAT EYE
COLOR!



EYEBALLS.



SAL
COULD
THIS
BE...

POP



HE
PROMISED
HE WOULD
COME BACK
TO ME.

NATSUO
NAKARAI...
MY LOVE...



NO ONE
CAN EVER
REPLACE
NATSUO.



SO I GO
ON WAITING,
BELIEVING IN
HIS PROMISE.



BUT I
COULDN'T
ACCEPT
THAT!



THEY
TOLD ME
THAT HE
DIED IN
BATTLE.





THERE
ARE THREE
EYEBALLS....



IS IT
FAMIL-
IAR?



IT WAS IN
A DIFFERENT
BOTTLE
FROM THE
OTHER TWO.



ONE OF
THEM IS
CLOUDED.

THAT'S
STRANGE.



THE EYES
THAT I LOVE
SHINE LIKE
OBISDIANS.



THIS EYEBALL
HAS NOTHING
TO DO WITH
NATSUO!



NO!

IT ISN'T
NATSUO'S!



YOU
CROSSED
THE OCEAN
TO RETURN
TO ME!

...I'M
HOME.

OH,
NATSUO!
YOU KEPT
YOUR
PROMISE!

SAY,
SAL...

THANK YOU,
HIRUKO.
THANK YOU
SO MUCH...

I DON'T
CARE IF
IT'S JUST
A DREAM
AS LONG
AS I'M
ABLE TO
SEE YOU
AGAIN...



WELL, I'LL
RESPECT THE
DREAMER'S
WISHES.



...



ARE YOU SURE
YOU DIDN'T
RECOGNIZE
THAT CLOUDED
EYEBALL?



TIME
TO
WAKE
UP
NOW.



DOESN'T
IT BOTHER
YOU AT ALL?





NATSUO?!
BUT YOU
DIED IN
BATTLE!

NA-
NATSUO...



TELL ME...
WHO ARE
YOU?



COME, SA-
I'VE COME
TO TAKE
YOU HOME...



SHE'S
IGNORING
HIM...

...



YES
...
NAT-
SUO IS
DEAD
...

??



I AM
NATSUO'S
TWIN
BROTHER,
FUYUO
NAKARAI.



I SEE...
I GUESS
SHE DIDN'T
MENTION
ME...

SAI CHOSE
HIM OVER
ME.

...I WAS
SICKLY AND
INTROVERTED.
I LOOKED
UP TO HIM
SO MUCH.

WHILE
HE WAS
BRAVE
AND
SPIRITED
...

WE MAY
HAVE BEEN
TWINS, BUT
WE WERE
THE EXACT
OPPOSITES...

IN HER
PAIN, SHE
LASHED
OUT AT
ME.

SAI WAS
DEVASTATED
AND COULDN'T
ACCEPT HIS
DEATH.

AND THEN
HE DIED.

MY
AFFECTION
FOR HER
RIVALED
THAT OF MY
BROTHER'S.



"I WISH
IT HAD
BEEN
YOU
INSTEAD."

I EVEN
GOUGED
OUT MY
BAD EYE*—
THE ONE
THING
THAT WAS
DIFFERENT
ABOUT US—
IN ORDER
TO LOOK
LIKE HIM.

I WANTED
TO BE
THERE
FOR HER
IN HIS
STEAD.

IN CATABACT





SHE ONLY
HAS EYES
FOR THE
REVIVED
NATSUO.

BUT SHE
IGNORED
IT THERE
TOO.



SHE WAS
IN SHOCK
WHEN SHE
WROTE THIS
LETTER.



THAT'S WHY
THE CLOUDED
EYE APPEARED
IN HER DREAM.



MAYBE
SEEING
SAY'S
DREAM
WILL HELP
YOU GIVE
UP...

THOUGH
HIS
ACTIONS
WERE
EXTREME,
I FEEL
FOR HIM.



EVEN SO,
I...

I WANT TO
STAY BY
HER SIDE,
BUT SHE
KEEPS
WAITING
FOR MY
BROTHER'S
RETURN.



TAKE ME
INSIDE
HER
DREAM!

I'VE
HEARD
OF THIS
PLACE.
PLEASE
HIRIKO,
LET ME
BE YOUR
CUSTOMER.



...AND
GIVE
UP...

MAYBE IF I
COULD SEE HIM
IN THE DREAM,
I COULD REALIZE
THAT IT'S
IMPOSSIBLE...

NO MATTER
HOW MUCH I
TRY, I CAN'T
LIVE UP TO MY
BROTHER.



OH...
I'LL
BE ABLE
TO SEE
NATSUO
AGAIN.



FINE
WITH ME,
BUT YOU
NEED THE
DREAMER'S
PERMISSION.



SLEEP
NOW...
LEAVE
THIS
WORLD
BEHIND.





THAT'S IT!

MAYBE I WOULD KNOW WHAT I LACK IF I
COULD SEE THROUGH HIS EYES...

?!

MAYBE I CAN
BECOME MY
BROTHER!

HIRUKO,
I WANT YOU
TO CHANGE
MY BROTHER'S
EYE FOR MINE.





I'M SORRY,
BUT I HAVE
TO RESPECT
THE WISHES OF
MY CUSTOMER,
FUYUO.

WHAT ARE
YOU DOING?!
STOP THAT,
HIRUKO!



AH...!
FUYUO,
WHAT HAVE
YOU DONE!



THERE
WAS NO
WAY.



I DON'T
WANT
HIM TO BE
REPLACED.

NATSUO
WAS
NATSUO!

YOU
COULD
NEVER
REPLACE
NATSUO!

THERE WAS NO WAY...

...THAT I COULD COMPETE.



I SEE

SHE
DID IT
FOR
ME...

I COULD NEVER BE BETTER THAN
MY BROTHER...

I KNOW
WHAT I
NEED TO
DO FOR
SAI NOW...

HIRUKO,
THIS IS
ENOUGH.

... BUT I'VE ONLY BEEN MAKING HER PAIN WORSE.

ARE YOU
SURE?

DEATH

...

IF I
ACCEPT
YOUR
DEATH,
THEN...



THANK
YOU SO
MUCH.

NOW MY HEART
CAN BE AT REST,
WHILE IN MY
DREAM I CAN
HAVE THE HAPPY
ENDING THAT I
COULDN'T IN
REALITY...

BUT I
KNEW
WHOSE
BODY
THIS
WAS.

THAT'S
HOW THE
NIGHTMARE
TURNED OUT...

BUT IN
HER DREAM,
THE THREE
OF THEM ARE
TOGETHER.

SAI IS
ALL
ALONE...

FIRST
NATSUO
THEN
FLYUO...

WHAT A
DISTASTEFUL
DREAM THIS
HAS BECOME...

MY
MY.

THE
TWENTY-
FIFTH
NIGHT:
CLOCKWORK

GOSSIPING
COLLAGE

UNDER
COVER
OF
DARK-
NESS

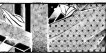
THEY
COME
TO THE
SLATED
BAR
TEA
HOUSE



HE'S GONE
TO A BAR
TO GOSSIP.

HOW
FRIVOLOUS

I WAS
WONDERING
WHY IT'S
SO QUIET.
HIFUMI
MUST BE
OUT.



DING



NO, NO
ONE HAS
BEEN
IN HERE
TONIGHT.

IT MUST
BE HER
DAUGHTER.
MAYBE
SHE'S
LOST...

LITTLE
MISAO?



WHAT
MAKES
YOU THINK
MISAO
WOULD
HAVE
COME
HERE?
PERHAPS
WE CAN
HELP.

OH...

HAS
LITTLE
MISAO
BEEN
HERE?



SO TO DISTRACT
HERSELF FROM
IMPENDING DEATH,
SHE'S STARTED
DREAMING OF HER
"FUTURE"...

THE
THING IS...
MISAO IS
SICK AND
ONLY HAS
A SHORT
TIME LEFT
TO LIVE...

IN HER
DREAM,
THE
JUNIKAI
TOWER IN
ASAKUSA
IS STILL
STANDING,
SO NIGHT
AFTER
NIGHT
SHE
WAKES
AND
GOES TO
WHERE
IT ONCE
STOOD.

AND IT'S
GOTTEN
SO SHE
CAN'T
DISTIN-
GUISH
BETWEEN
THE
DREAM
AND
REALITY.

I DON'T
KNOW THE
DETAILS,
BUT IN HER
DREAM,
TIME PASSES
QUICKLY.
SHE AGES
AS SHE LIVES
OUT ALL THE
MILESTONES
OF HER LIFE.



BUT IF
SHE'S
NOT
HERE,
WHERE
IS SHE
...?

THAT'S WHY
I THOUGHT
SHE MIGHT
COME HERE,
TO SEEK
HELP FOR
THIS DREAM.

BUT THE
REAL TOWER
COLLAPSED
IN THE GREAT
EARTHQUAKE.



SO MISAO
BELIEVES THAT
THE TOWER IN
HER DREAMS
IS REAL...





THE DELIRIUM—A PLACE FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE TORMENTED BY THEIR DELUSIONS.



INSIDE
ARE
SPECIAL
ROOMS
THAT
MAKE
FANTASIES
BECOME
REALITIES



AT THE
DELIRIA,
PEOPLE'S
DELUSIONS
AND
FANTASIES
COME
TRUE

—
THOUGH
THEY
DON'T
REALIZE
IT AS
SUCH.

H
E

W
O
O



A
ONE-WORD
PHASE
CONSIDERED
AS THE
MAGIC TRIGGER



AND KARI
IS THE
KEY THAT
UNLOCKS
THEM ALL



SHIM DENCHI ISLAND



FOR WHEN MISAO REACHES THE END OF HER FANTASY, SHE WILL ALSO REACH THE END OF HER LIFE.



WHAT DO YOU MEAN?



HE'S BACK?!

I LOVE IT SO MUCH I SHOULD RETURN IT.



I PREFER A NEVER-ENDING FANTASY.

I'M NOT A FAN OF QUICK, MISERABLE ENDINGS.



WELL, NIGHTMARES ARE THE SAME, AREN'T THEY?

HA HA



I DON'T GET THE APPEAL.

NEVER-ENDING ...





"HIRUKO"
WOULD HAVE
UNDERSTOOD.

YOU'VE
SEEN
HIM?

YOU
MEAN
AZUSA?

I'M
GLAD
TO
HEAR
IT.

YES...
HE'S
VERY
WELL,
JUST
AS
YOU
SAID.

CL1



CK



ONCE
SOMEONE'S
ENTERED
THEY
USUALLY
CAN'T
LEAVE...

THE
DOOR
IS
OPEN
NOW.



...UNLESS
YOU CAN
BREAK
THE
DELUSION
AND
MAKE
THEM
REALIZE
WHERE
THEY
ARE.







WOULD
BE
READY?
THAT'S
QUICK.



MISAO?
I'M A
BAKU
CALLED
HIRUKO.
I'VE
COME
TO GET
YOU.



TICK
TOCK

THE
JUNIKAI IS
GROWING
AS THE
CLOCK
TICKS...

BOOM



THAT'S
RIGHT.

MADE
IT?

TICK
TOCK

?!



TICK
TOCK

IN MY
DREAM,
I TURN
THE WINDUP
KEY AND
BUILD
MY OWN
WORLD.

TOCK

WHY?!
I'VE
MADE
IT THIS
BIG SO
FAR!



BUT THIS
IS ALL A
FANTASY.
THIS WORLD
IS AN
ILLUSION.

AND YOU
WANT TO
SPEND
YOUR
FUTURE
HERE...



SO YOU
REALLY
BELIEVE
THAT THIS
WORLD
EXISTS.



...JUST
A LITTLE WHILE
AGO I
WAS
RACE
FOURTEEN.



THIS CLOCK FACE IS TURNING TO THE LEFT.
NORMALLY A CLOCK WOULD...





I CONTROL
TIME HERE.
SO THE MORE I
TURN THE KEY,
THE MORE I...



IF I
TURN
THE KEY,
I GROW
UP TOO.



IN THIS
PLACE SHE
CAN HAVE
THE LIFE
SHE NEVER
WOULD HAVE
OTHERWISE...



THE
TOWER'S
GROWN
REALLY
TALL.



IT'S ALL
PLANNED
OUT?

YES. WHEN
I GET OLDER,
I CLIMB THE
COMPLETED
TOWER AND MEET
THE MAN OF
MY DREAMS.



YES. I'VE
DECIDED
EVERYTHING
THAT'S GOING
TO HAPPEN.



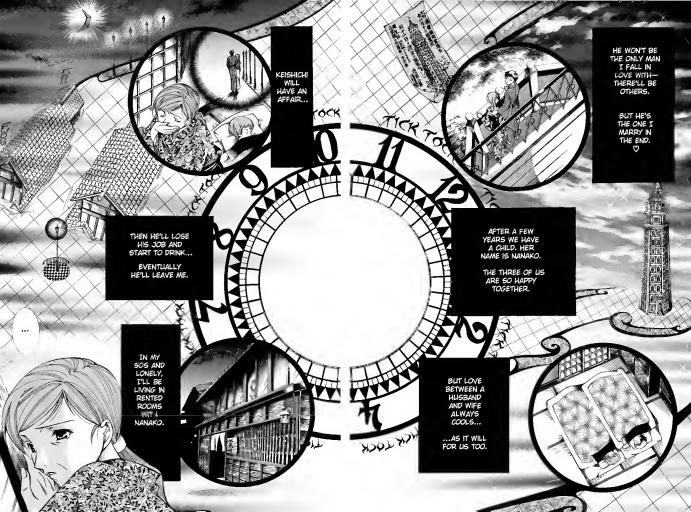
I WANT
TO SEE THE
FUTURE THAT
AWAITS YOU
IN THIS
WORLD.



CRANK CRANK

THE MAN
I'LL MEET
IN THE
TOWER IS
CALLED
KEYSWICH.





KEISHICHI
WILL
HAVE AN
AFFAIR...

THEN HE'LL LOSE
HIS JOB AND
START TO DRINK...

EVENTUALLY
HE'LL LEAVE ME.

IN MY
SOS AND
LONELY,
I'LL BE
LIVING IN
RENTED
ROOMS
W/IT I
NANAKO.

AFTER A FEW
YEARS WE HAVE
A CHILD. HER
NAME IS NANAKO.

THE THREE OF US
ARE SO HAPPY
TOGETHER.

BUT LOVE
BETWEEN A
HUSBAND
AND WIFE
ALWAYS
COOLS...

...AS IT WILL
FOR US TOO.

HE WON'T BE
THE ONLY MAN
I FALL IN
LOVE WITH—
THERE'LL BE
OTHERS.

BUT HE'S
THE ONE I
MARRY IN
THE END.
♡



HE WON'T BE
THE ONLY MAN
I FALL IN
LOVE WITH—
THERE'LL BE
OTHERS.

BUT HE'S
THE ONE I
MARRY IN
THE END.
♡



AFTER A FEW
YEARS WE HAVE
A CHILD. HER
NAME IS NANAKO.

THE THREE OF US
ARE SO HAPPY
TOGETHER.

BUT LOVE
BETWEEN A
HUSBAND
AND WIFE
ALWAYS
COOLS...

...AS IT WILL
FOR US TOO.



KEISHICHI
WILL
HAVE AN
AFFAIR...

THEN HE'LL LOSE
HIS JOB AND
START TO DRINK...

EVENTUALLY
HE'LL LEAVE ME.

IN MY
BOX AND
LONELY,
I'LL BE
LIVING IN
RENTED
ROOMS
WITH
NANAKO.





THIS...
IS MY
FUTURE?

MMH.



BUT YOU
DON'T
LOOK
HAPPY
...

MMH...



WHAT?

IT WAS
VERY WELL
PLANNED.



I WAS
YOUNG AND
CUTE WHEN
I CAME INTO
THIS ROOM...

MY JOINTS
ACHE...

MY FACE IS
WRINKLED...

WAAAH
I WANT
TO GO
BACK TO
WHO I
WAS!

WAAAH
I DON'T
WANT TO
GET OLD!

I DON'T
WANT THIS
FUTURE.

AH.



EVERY-
THING
YOU'VE
CREATED
IN HERE
WILL
DISAPPEAR.

IF YOU
WANT
TO GO
HOME,
YOU HAVE
TO GIVE
UP THIS
DELUSION.



EVEN
THOUGH
IN THE
REAL
WORLD
YOU ONLY
HAVE A
SHORT
TIME LEFT
TO LIVE?



I TOLD YOU
I WAS HERE
TO TAKE
YOU BACK.



YOU TURNED
THE KEY...
AND I SAW
SO MANY
THINGS...

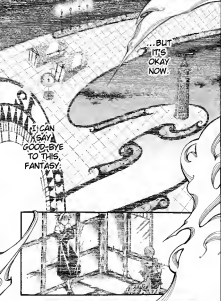
THERE'S
NOTHING
HERE FOR
ME...

GIVE
UP...
THIS
DELU-
SION
...



YOU MADE ME
REMEMBER
IMPORTANT
THINGS THAT
I'D FORGOTTEN...

THE
REAL
ME...



...BUT
IT'S
OKAY
NOW.

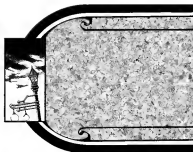
I CAN
SAY
GOOD-BYE
TO THIS
FANTASY.



I'M...
GOING
TO DIE?

THAT'S
WHAT
I WAS
SAD
ABOUT





SHOULDN'T
SHE GO
BACK TO HER
ORIGINAL,
YOUTHFUL
FORM WHEN
THE DELUSION
WAS OVER?



THIS
ISN'T
LITTLE
MISAO!



LITTLE
MISAO.

I'M
SO GLAD
YOU'RE
BACK...



I'M
NANAKO.



MISS
AGATSUMA
...
IS
YOUR
FIRST
NAME
...?



T H E N :

AH

MISAO
WASN'T MISS
AGATSUMA'S
DAUGHTER,
SHE WAS HER
MOTHER.

SO YOUR
FATHER'S
NAME...



SHE
CAME
TO
BELIEVE
THAT
SHE
WAS A
LITTLE
GIRL...
AND
BEHAVED
LIKE
ONE.

SO, I
STARTED
TO CALL
HER...

AND
THEN
HER
MEMORY
STARTED
TO GO
...

IT'S
KEISHICH.



MY PARENTS
MET AT JUNKAL
BUT THEY SPLIT
UP YEARS AFTER
I WAS BORN.



SHE DID
THE BEST
SHE COULD
RAISING ME
ALONE.



AND THE ROOM
TURNED HER
PERCEIVED
THOUGHTS
INTO
REALITY...

ALL SO
AT FIRST
THE CLOCK
FACE IN
HER
FANTASY
WAS
TURNING
RIGHT—
REVERSING
TIME, BACK
TO HER
CHILDHOOD.

ACK TORA



ARE YOU
BACK TO
NORMAL?!

M-
MOTHERS



YOU
DON'T
NEED TO
CALL ME
THAT
ANYMORE,
NANAKO.



OH
HOW
WONDER-
FUL!



NANAKO.



...AND
HER
LONGING
TO GO
BACK
THERE
CREATED
THIS
DELUSION.

I SUPPOSE
SHE WAS
HAPPIEST
IN HER
CAREFREE
CHILDHOOD...



BUT
WAS SHE
ACCEPTED
IT NOW
...?



AS SHE
LIVED HER
LIFE OVER
AGAIN, SHE
CAME BACK TO
HER SENSES
WHEN SHE
REALIZED WHAT
SHE HAD
REJECTED.



**THE
TWENTY-
SIXTH
NIGHT:
SHADOWS**



HOW
SAD...

FOR ME
DREAMS
ARE TO
BE EATEN,
NOT SEEN.

SO YOU
DON'T
DREAM
AT ALL,
HIRUKO?

THERE ARE GOOD
DREAMS TOO—
THE KIND THAT PUT
A SMILE ON YOUR
FACE ALL DAY.
SO YOU NEVER
GET TO SEE THOSE?

THE ONLY
DREAMS YOU
KNOW ARE
NIGHTMARES.

BUT YOU
DON'T EVEN GET
TO SEE THEM.
WONDERFUL
THINGS HAPPEN.
YOUR GREATEST
WISHES...

THOSE
DREAMS
ARE
USELESS
TO ME.

OH...?

I HAVE
WISHES
...

Again
with the
night-
mares...

...TO EAT
DELICIOUS
NIGHTMARES.

UNDER
COVER
OF
DARK-
NESS

THEY
CAME
TO THE
SILVER
6900
TEA
HOUSE

SECOND
SOLACE





THAT'S
FINE.
WHAT'S
YOUR
NIGHT-
MARE?

I DON'T
HAVE ANY
MONEY
THOUGH.
IS THAT
OKAY?

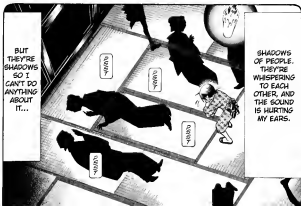


I'VE BEEN
DREAMING
ABOUT
SHADOWS.



UHM...
I'M
MEGURU
KUCHITSHI.

I CAME TO
ASK YOU
ABOUT A
NIGHTMARE...



BUT
THEY'RE
SHADOWS
SO I
CAN'T DO
ANYTHING
ABOUT
IT...

SHADOWS
OF PEOPLE.
THEY'RE
WHISPERING
TO EACH
OTHER, AND
THE SOUND
IS HURTING
MY EARS.



SLEEP
NOW...
LEAVE
THIS
WORLD
BEHIND.





AN EYE
FOR AN
EYE, A
SHADOW
FOR A
SHADOW.



IT
CUTS!





SHUT
UP!

THERE
MIGHT
BE
SOME
OTHER



BUT HE
LOVES HIS
PARENTS,
SO HE'S
SURE TO...

I DON'T
UNDERSTAND
ANYTHING
YOU'RE
SAYING!



HOPEFULLY
THEY'LL
LIKE HIM...



NOW I CAN
GET RID OF
THEM EASILY!

GREAT.



YAR!

YAR!



WAIT... I THINK I'VE HEARD THIS
CONVERSATION BEFORE.





NAME _____

[Signature]

NOT
LETTING
YOU GO

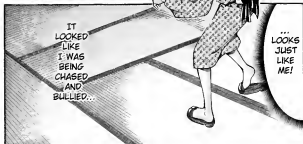
HOW
CART
LIFT

SLASH



AND THAT
SHADOW...

I THOUGHT I
SAW THE SHADOWS
OF THREE KIDS BUT
THERE'S A FOURTH!



IT
LOOKED
LIKE
I WAS
BEING
CHASED
AND
BULLIED...

...
LOOKS
JUST
LIKE
ME!

COULD IT BE THAT TIME WHEN...



SO THAT
IS MY...

WHERE'S
YOUR
SHADOW,
MEGURU?
IT'S NOT
ATTACHED
TO YOU.



HE'S
SURROUNDED
AGAIN...



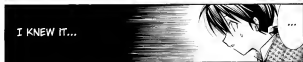
DON'T
RUN
AWAY!



DON'T
YOU
KNOW
WHAT'S
GOING TO
HAPPEN
IF YOU
GO?

YOU
CAN'T
JUST
LEAVE
LIKE
THAT!

WE'RE
NOT
GOING
TO LET
YOU GO!



I KNEW IT...

...



THERE WAS
A TIME WHEN
PEOPLE AROUND
ME STARTED
LOOKING AT ME
DIFFERENTLY.

YEAH...

IT'S
FOR THE
FAMILY...

IS
THAT
SO...

THEY
STARTED
WHIS-
PERING
JUST LIKE
IN MY
DREAM.

IT
CAN'T BE
HELPED.

FORGIVE US.
WE DON'T WANT
TO LET YOU GO.
BUT WE HAVE
NO CHOICE...



IT STARTED
THE TIME MY
PARENTS
TOLD ME...

IT'S FOR
YOUR OWN
GOOD.



YOU WON'T
HAVE TO
WORRY ABOUT
FOOD THERE.
YOU'LL LIVE
IN A BIG
HOUSE AND
THEY'LL LOOK
AFTER YOU

MY FAMILY WAS
POOR BUT I WAS
USED TO IT.

I KNOW HOW
MUCH THEY WANTED A
GOOD FUTURE FOR ME...

SO I DIDN'T CRY
AND I DECIDED...



I'M GOING TO GO THERE AND BE HAPPY...FOR THEIR SAKE.



BUT MY
FRIENDS
WERE
JEALOUS
OF ME.



DON'T
YOU
KNOW
WHAT'S
GOING
TO
HAPPEN
IF
YOU
DO?

YOU
CAN'T
JUST
LEAVE
LIKE
THAT!

WE'RE
NOT
GOING
TO
LET
YOU
GO!



HE'S
STILL
GO
YOUNG
...

I
DON'T
CARE.

IT
CAN'T
BE
HELPED.

WE'RE
NOT
LETTING
YOU
GO!

YOU
DON'T
KNOW
WHAT
I'M
GOING
THROUGH!

JUST
LEAVE
ME
ALONE!

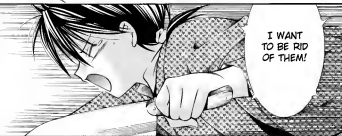
SHUT
UP.



ALL THE WHISPERS
AROUND
ME WERE
TORMENTING
ME. THAT'S
WHY I
HAD THIS
NIGHTMARE...



AND THEY
MANIFESTED
AS SHADOWS
BECAUSE I
KEPT HEARING
A LOT OF
VOICES OF
PEOPLE I
DIDN'T KNOW.



I WANT
TO BE RID
OF THEM!



WE'RE
NOT
LETTING
YOU
GO!

YOU
CAN'T
JUST...

HEARING
THEIR
VOICES IS
MAKING ME
QUESTION MY
DECISION!
I CAN'T
STAND IT!



I CAN'T
LET MY
MOTHER
AND
FATHER
DOWN.



NO
MATTER
HOW
LONELY
I'LL
BE!



I HAVE
TO GO!

A black and white manga-style illustration. A character with dark hair and a determined expression is shown from the chest up, crouching inside a cage made of thick, dark metal bars. The character is wearing a dark, form-fitting outfit. The background is a bright, hazy sky with some faint clouds. The overall tone is dramatic and somber.

NO ONE IS
GOING TO
MAKE ME
CHANGE MY
MIND...

NOW I CAN
NO LONGER
HEAR WHAT
PEOPLE ARE
SAYING
ANYMORE...

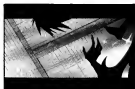
...EVEN WHEN
I RETURN
TO REALITY.

C
H
A
P
T
E
R
1
1



AND I'M
GOING TO
BE HAPPY
THERE...
FOR MY
PARENTS'
SAKE.

I'M
GOING.



TIME TO
WAKE UP
NOW.

foosy



AND HE'S
NOT GOING
TO CHANGE
HIS MIND,
NO MATTER
WHAT
ANYONE
SAYS.

MEGURU
IS BEING
TAKEN TO
THE OTHER
HOUSE.



I HOPE
IT WAS
JUST A
MISUNDER-
STANDING.

BUT I CAN'T
BELIEVE THAT
HIS FRIENDS
TREATED HIM
DIFFERENTLY
BECAUSE THEY
WERE JEALOUS...



THEY
SAID...

WHAT WAS IT
THE CHILDREN
WERE SAYING
TO MEGURU?



HE
WAS
SO
DETER-
MINED
THAT I
DIDN'T
SAY
ANYTHING
TO
CAUSE
HIM
MORE
DOUBT.

HM?

...FOR ONCE
YOU'RE
PERCEPTIVE.



PLEASE
LOOK
AFTER
HIM.



DIDN'T YOUR
PARENTS
TELL YOU?
OR ARE YOU
STUPID?

WHAT?
ARE YOU
DREAMING?

HUH?



WOW...
THIS IS A
REALLY
BIG HOUSE.
I'M GOING
TO BE A
MEMBER
OF THE
FAMILY
HERE?

YOU'RE HERE
TO WORK AS
A SERVANT.

THEY SENT
YOU AWAY SO
THAT THEY'LL
HAVE ONE
LESS MOUTH
TO FEED.





YOU'LL GET
TO WORK
IMMEDIATELY!



THIS IS
YOUR
ROOM.
GET
READY
QUICK.



SOME-
THING
BAD
WILL

DON'T
YOU
KNOW
WHAT'S
GOING TO
HAPPEN
IF YOU
DO?

YOU
CAN'T
JUST
LEAVE
LIKE
THAT!

WE'RE
NOT
LETTING
YOU
GO!

THE
TWENTY-
SIXTH
AND A HALF
NIGHT:
SUMMER

HI!
MIZUKI
HERE.
HIFUMI
DRAGGED
US TO THE
SEASIDE
FOR SOME
FUN THIS
SUMMER.







HERE
I AM.



MIZUKI!
COME
BACK
TO THIS
WORLD!

HA HA!
I CAN'T
STOP
HAVING
FUN.

LET'S
GO!



*How
can I
make
me!*

NO, I
DON'T
WANT IT.

HA HA HA!
NO NEED
TO BE SHY.
HERE, TRY
IT ON!

SHKK

ZIP

I HAVE
ONE FOR
HIRUKO
TOO...

GOTCHA!

BONK!



ARE
YOU
TRYING
TO
TAKE
ME
WITH
YOU?!

C'MON,
HIRUKO.
IT'S FUN.



ISN'T
THIS
FUN?!

HEH
HEH
HEH

HA
HA
HA

HEH HEH...
THIS IS
FUN...

This
is fun,
Hiruko
...

YES...
IT'S
VERY
SAD.

MOMMY,
LOOK AT
THOSE
STRANGE
PEOPLE.

WE REALLY
DID HAVE A
GOOD TIME
TOGETHER...



Afterword

Hi Shin Mashiba here. Thanks to you, we've reached volume four! Thanks so much to the people at Square Enix and my wonderful readers for all the support. Also, sincerest apologies to my editor to whom I've caused so much trouble.

This time I tried to delve deeper into the characters' pasts. We still haven't uncovered everything, but I hope you'll be patient.



Big Thank You

My editor Yuki Sasaki and all the people at Square Enix.
My special friends Wan Wan Shirai, Riru Shirayoshi and Nema.

My wonderful assistants
Kazumi Arai, Miko Arai,
Mai Tanaka, OKASAWA and
MOAI (Info)



- ← Next up are Wan Wan Shirai's great pages, so get ready!
(Wan Wan, thank you for drawing it all without sketching it first! I'm so not disappointed!)
- ← See page 108 to find out who won the contest from volume three!

Love, Yuki



MAKING THE WORD LOOK PEOPLE GATHER

UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS

THEY COME TO THE SILVER STAR INN HOUSE

The Tabun* Rules

- Draw it freestyle without looking at the manga.
- Have the guts to draw in one shot with just a pen.
- Maybe it'll be a series. (Only in the manga.)



Wan Wan "Tabun" Shirori



NOW HE'S SULKING!

YEAH, YEAH, I SHOULD ONLY EAT NIGHTMARES.



LOOK, IT'S GETTING REALLY ANNOYING, SO STOP IT.

GLOOM

YEAH, I CAN'T DRINK IT.

Eat a dream!



IF YOU LEAVE IT ALONE, THE GIRL'S RIBBON WILL GET TOO BIG...



WOW, HIS CHARACTER IS TOTALLY DIFFERENT...

I REALLY DON'T WANT TO EAT THEM.

WILL YOU TAKE THEM FOR ME?

SAY, LISTEN THE TO THIS QUALITY OF DREAMS HAS BEEN REALLY BAD LATELY.



... AND THE

PATTERN OF THE KIMONO WILL KEEP GETTING LARGER.



I'VE SEEN IT BEFORE

THIS PATTERN

IT'S MASHIBA'S NIGHTMARE.



THIS ONE IS AWFUL.

ROLL

HLIH?



Headshake



Crown Stance



* This is Mariko's drawing of me. It's subtle.

Tough guy



Sideways



Wan Wan Shiroy's Contest ☆

I was surprised at how many people entered.

All the entries were excellent but the grand prize goes to...

Sotetsu & Youkan!

The prize will be sent out real soon.

The runner-ups...

Suzuki from Niigata

- Thank you for writing 'Loyal' all over the borders of your entry. But in two places you only wrote 'La!' That was great! I guess you were tired from all that writing. I don't want you to ever forget that feeling.

Inoue from Nakakoma-gun

- You wrote my name wrong ('Uou' instead of 'Shiroi') all the way through. It was really funny! If it wasn't done on purpose, that must have been such a pain.

Anonymous (14) from Osaka

When you said, 'I really hate the way that @Jiumi's name looks like five lines when written vertically' I thought that was one of the best answers of all.



Thanks very much for all the mail!

I'll never forget! I'll cherish them all!!

Sleeping



Peeking





Dreams on the menu in this volume: a woman struggling with her appearance and another trapped in darkness, a man with a sinister childhood secret, a cocoon that is more than mere silk, a delusional dream with no happy ending, a man unable to let go of past regrets, and a child's imagination that is not as innocent as it seems.



SHIN MASHIBA

I have recurring dreams that I'm still in school. I relive final exams, summer vacation and the last day of school. When it's finally time for graduation, I start over again at the entrance exam.



Shin Mashiba's first manga, *Yumekui Kenbun* (Nightmare Inspector), premiered in *Monthly Stencil*, a shojo magazine, in December 2001 and was then serialized in *Monthly G Fantasy* from 2003 to 2007. Mashiba-san's own nightmares include being forced to eat 50 living slugs and being chased by time.

NIGHTMARE INSPECTOR: YUMEKUI KENBUN ④

Shin Mashiba

Translation: Gemma Celling

English Adaptation: Kristina Blachere

Touch-up Art & Lettering: James Gaubatz

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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